

What My Grandmothers Taught Me

Lesson 5: Ruth and Redemption

Begin with Opening Prayer on page 45

Our previous studies focused on the Hebrew word *Hesed*, loyal love. This study introduces a new term: *go'el*, translated as “redeemer” or “next of kin.” Before we begin the study of this word, what does the word redeemer mean to you at the moment?

Chapter 3 (If not read before, do so now)

Our author defines the duties of the *go'el* on page 47. Defined as next of kin or redeemer or kinsman-redeemer, the responsibility of this person is to keep the family together, to restore the family. Examples of this are on page 47, bottom left. How does this very practical definition of redeemer add to the meaning of calling Christ “Redeemer”?

Through a *double entendre* (thank you, Meryl, for helping us understand this!), Naomi instructs Ruth on how to approach Boaz in a very intimate way. When Boaz discovers Ruth at his bedside (“uncovered his feet”), he calls her “worthy wife” while she calls herself “servant.” Basically, Boaz is saying, “worthy, strong woman.” Who would you describe in this way? What might it feel like to insert your own name here?

Chapter 4

Boaz promises to redeem both Ruth and Naomi even though there is another kinsman. The details on how Boaz negotiates with this other kinsman are in chapter 4. Discuss this negotiation process in your group to help each other understand it. (see page 48, left column) Note Boaz’s commitment to redeem Ruth and Naomi. Have you ever been included in someone else’s generosity?

The Book of Ruth ends like a Christmas Hallmark movie. The happy ending.... Boaz and Ruth marry and produce an heir (a very important one, we will find out). Naomi, who called herself bitter at the beginning of our story, has recovered her parcel of land, her name, and her sense of identity. When has God redeemed an event or situation in your life?

Our author says, "God not only protects the 'least of these' but works through them to enable the story of salvation to continue." "Moabite" was the most offensive nationality to consider in the story of Israel. (Remember Ruth was a Moabite.) What name might we replace it with, to confront our own prejudices and assumptions?

There is beauty in the woman of the community coming together to bless Naomi. Read their words again in verses 14-17a. Which words touch your heart?

In this story of kinsman-redeemer is a surprise ending. The son of Ruth and Boaz becomes the grandfather of King David, and ultimately leads to everyone's Redeemer, Jesus Christ. What impact has the story of Ruth had on you?

End together with the prayer on page 50.